

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Ridge Westfield Elementary School

Mount Airy vicinity, Surry County, SR0860, Listed 12/19/2019

Nomination by J. Daniel Pezzoni, Landmark Preservation Associates

Photographs by J. Daniel Pezzoni, September 2018



North or front elevation of school, view facing southwest



Corridor

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ridge Westfield Elementary School

Other names/site number: Ridge-Westfield Elementary School; Ridge Westfield Colored School

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4416 Westfield Road

City or town: Mount Airy State: North Carolina County: Surry

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Work in Progress

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; STEEL; GLASS;
ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Ridge Westfield Elementary School (1956-57) is located at 4416 Westfield Road in eastern Surry County, North Carolina, approximately six miles east of the county's largest community, Mount Airy. The one-story Modernist building of brick-veneered cinder block construction has a flat roof and a roughly rectangular plan. For purposes of simplicity the building is described as facing north (in actuality the building faces north-northwest), toward Westfield Road (Highway 89), with a slightly projecting classroom block at the west end, an administrative/auxiliary midsection with an off-center recessed front entry, and a slightly higher-roofed cafeteria/kitchen at the east end. Other exterior features of note include banks of large classroom and cafeteria/kitchen windows, secondary entries with flat-roofed porches at the east and west ends of the building, and a boiler flue to the rear. The interior has a central corridor which runs most of the length of the building, ending at the cafeteria/kitchen. Walls are typically painted cinder block, floors have mostly vinyl-type tiles, doors are hollow-core plywood (some with glass panels), and ceilings have textured plaster finishes. Other resources in the nominated area of approximately two acres include a ca. 1960 playground to the west of the building and a ca. 1956-57 well house behind to the south, both contributing resources. The nominated area is

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planted in grass without landscaping and includes portions of a driveway/parking area, mostly in the southeast corner of the area, and concrete walkways lead from the front and cafeteria entries, the latter connecting to concrete steps with metal railings at a chain link fence along the road. Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church (1959) stands to the east of the nominated area and a small cemetery stands to the west. The church has post-1970 front additions that compromise its integrity whereas the cemetery dates entirely or nearly entirely after 1970. To the north is Westfield Road with Athey Simmons Road intersecting on the other side. To the south the land drops away to a terraced playing field. The relatively level ridgetop site lies at an elevation of between 1,580 and 1,600 feet above sea level. The surroundings are rural in character with a mix of woods and cleared land with dispersed houses in the near and farther distance.

Narrative Description

Inventory

1. Ridge Westfield Elementary School. 1956-57. Contributing building.

School Exterior

The building is veneered with smooth red bricks laid in stretcher courses with a stretcher/header course every six courses. The flat roof projects on all sides and has replacement 2017 built-up roofing with metal flashing along the projecting edge. A non-recent photo shows that it formerly featured an inscription of free-standing letters (probably metal or painted wood) forming the name of the school and attached to the edge of the roof over the front entry. There are multiple bubble-form skylights (the bubbles were replaced in 2017) and a metal ventilation bonnet. The metal sash windows vary in size, sash arrangement, and grouping. The tall classroom windows at the west end of the building are grouped in banks of six and each has four stacked sashes: (from bottom to top) a hopper sash, a fixed sash, an awning sash, and a second fixed sash. The awning sash is double the size of the other sashes and is divided in half by a muntin so as to create the effect of five stacked horizontal sashes of identical size. The banks of cafeteria/kitchen windows at the east end of the building are taller than the classroom windows, though they also have (from bottom to top) an operable, fixed, operable, fixed sash arrangement. The added height is created by the doubling of the size of the top sash and its division by a center muntin to create the effect of six stacked horizontal sashes of identical size. Other windows, such as the boiler room and restroom windows, are smaller. All windows have concrete sills.

The entries vary in form. The front (north-facing) and west end entries have double-leaf steel doors with wired glass panels in a surround of steel-framed wire-glass transom and sidelight windows. The sidelights and glass door panels are divided into stack panes by muntins. Double-leaf steel doors with stack-pane glass panels but lacking sidelights and transoms also provide access to the cafeteria at the east end and the boiler room on the south side. The west end and cafeteria (east end) entries are sheltered by entry porches with flat roofs supported by slender steel poles. The front entry is contained in a recess.

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On the rear elevation, adjoining the kitchen, is an original recessed screened porch that was used for grocery deliveries. Between it and the boiler room doors are two Majestic (brand name) cast-iron coal hatches set into the wall. They are painted green, as are the building's steel doors, whereas trim like door and window surrounds and the roof overhang soffits are painted pale yellow. Also painted yellow is the one surviving downspout next to the west entry. The porch poles are painted brick red. Between the two west end classrooms and the rest of the building are seams in the brickwork (explained below). At the front northeast corner of the building is a small sign with the former address number 4392.

School Interior

The six classrooms, equal or roughly equal in size, are arranged to each side of a center corridor, three to a side. High on the corridor walls are steel-frame hopper windows for interior natural lighting and ventilation. In the corridor and most other spaces are original ceiling light fixtures with stepped concentric circular metal diffusers. Light switch plates are bronzed and radiators are positioned under windows. The classrooms retain their blackboard frames. One classroom has plywood base and wall cabinets for school supplies and a small bathroom with a high pale-yellow tile wainscot and a mosaic tile floor in shades of tan (the bathroom has a small high window visible on the exterior). On the bathroom's outer walls are an original ceramic sink and drinking fountain and a Westroll towel dispenser. Interior walls separating the four west end classrooms are constructed of painted brick, indicating the walls were formerly exterior (all other classroom walls are painted cinder block). The two westernmost rooms were apparently added during initial construction, because former teachers and students from the time of the school's construction do not recall them being added. The two westernmost rooms therefore presumably represent a late modification of the design before the school was completed and occupied.

The east end of the corridor makes an L turn to the front entry. At this end are doors to two restrooms on the north side of the corridor; the office and clinic or nurse's station on the south side of the corridor; and double-leaf doors to the cafeteria with a metal plate reading cafeteria over them at the east end of the corridor. In the office is an IBM Time Control clock with a gray finish and on/off switches. The clock operated the bells that signaled the end of recess and the school day. At the south end of the cafeteria are strung two wires from which once hung curtains used in performances, commencement exercises, and the like. A portion of the portable plywood stage for the performances currently leans against the wall in the L of the corridor. In the wall between the cafeteria and kitchen, near the east doors, is an opening with a roll-up steel shutter and an aluminum-trimmed shelf. The shutter was manufactured by the J. G. Wilson Company of New York, New York, and Norfolk, Virginia (established 1876). The opening was used for returning cafeteria trays. In the kitchen are an overhead range hood, a sink, milk-glass ceiling light fixtures, an A. O. Smith water heater (manufactured in Kankakee, Illinois), and a terra-cotta tile floor and baseboards.

The interior is painted various light colors that date to the building's use as a Sunday School after 1966. The corridor is painted pale yellow above a turquoise dado. The cafeteria is white above a pale blue dado. The kitchen is white above a gray dado. The classrooms are painted

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either white, pink, or pale green. Water damage has caused some ceiling plaster to fall, revealing steel truss-beam roof construction.

2. Playground. Ca. 1960. Contributing site.

The playground has steel play equipment including a slide, swing set, monkey bars, and merry-go-round. The merry-go-round, which is of steel and wood construction, has an octagonal form. Its wood seat boards were replaced in recent decades, and it and the other equipment are painted rainbow colors.

3. Well house. Ca. 1956-57. Contributing structure.

The well house is a small brick structure with an asphalt-shingled gable roof, plywood sheathing in the gables, and a stack-panel wood door opening to the south. The well house, which contains a pump, provides water to the school and the church.

Integrity Statement

Ridge Westfield Elementary School possesses a high level of integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. The building is virtually unaltered in design, workmanship and materials from its historic-period appearance. The most significant change is the 2017 reroofing, which resulted in new built-up roofing material and bubble skylights, but this preserved the flat roof form, structure, and skylight openings. The historic rural setting is little changed from the historic period, with the adjacent church, historic dwellings and a few modern dwellings somewhat farther off, and surrounding open areas and woods. Cemeteries dating to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been created to the west of the boundaries but these are consistent with the church function of the larger property and, as largely open green space, have a light effect on the historic character of the school's setting.

Archaeological Potential

The Ridge Westfield Elementary School is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological remains, such as trash deposits, remnant landscape features such as planting beds and paths, infrastructural remains, and structural remains associated with earlier school buildings which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the school. Information concerning institutional culture, as well as the spatial organization of outdoor activities and the character of daily life at the school through time, can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the school. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black
Education

Period of Significance

1957-1966

Significant Dates

1957

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Franklin, John M. (architect)

Fulk and Needham, Inc. (general contractor)

Pilson, Clarence (brickmason)

McArthur, Eugene (role in construction)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Ridge Westfield Elementary School, located in the Mount Airy vicinity of Surry County, North Carolina, is a one-story Modernist building constructed in 1956-57. The school, historically a center of the Chestnut Ridge African American community, was designed by Elkin architect John M. Franklin and was built in part by individuals from the community including Clarence Pilson and Eugene McArthur. The school served students in grades one through eight from eastern Surry County and western Stokes County. Ridge Westfield Elementary School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the education and ethnic heritage: black areas of significance for its significant contribution to the history of segregation/desegregation-era African American education in Surry County. The school which was constructed during an era of school consolidation and improvements in North Carolina, consolidated two earlier schools in eastern Surry County with the aim of providing black students with larger and improved educational facilities, intended to be separate but equal to facilities for white students. Criteria Consideration A applies since the building is owned by a religious institution but derives its significance from its historical importance in the areas of education and ethnic heritage: black. The period of significance extends from 1957, the year the school opened, until 1966, the year its use as a public school was discontinued during desegregation. Ridge Westfield Elementary School is eligible at the local level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Background, Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black Context

The history of Ridge Westfield Elementary School begins with the history of the Chestnut Ridge African American community, which coalesced in eastern Surry County, North Carolina, around the turn of the twentieth century.¹ According to Katie Hatcher, former Ridge Westfield Elementary School teacher, the community was established by her grandfather George Robert McCarther II (1875-1966), who purchased ninety-three acres at the intersection of Athey Simmons and McCarther roads about a half mile north of the school and lived on the tract with

¹ A number of individuals assisted with the preparation of this report, foremost among them Mindy France, contact for the nomination's sponsor, The Historic Ridge Westfield Elementary School, Inc. The following members of the sponsoring organization shared their recollections of the school or provided other information: Betty France, Dennis France, Mindy France, Katie L. Hatcher, Nevada Love, Brenda McCalop, and Carolyn Roberts. Nevada Love also proofread the draft nomination. Lashene Lowe wrote the text of the 2011 and 2012 school reunion programs that provided information for the report. Others who provided assistance included Amy Snyder, Curator of Collections for the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History; Emily Stroud with Surry County Schools; and Josh Hager, Archivist, State Archives of North Carolina.

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his wife, Ida Frazier McCarther (1881-1972).² Another early member of the community was Samuel Fletcher Jessup (1871-1945) who married Mary Jane Hines (d. 1925) in 1899.³ Fletcher Jessup purchased seventy-six acres in the vicinity in 1905 and in 1906 sold one acre on the "Big Road" (Westfield Road) to the Surry County Board of Education for the establishment of a school.⁴ At about the same time, in 1904, the Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church was established. The congregation, which split off from Locust Grove Primitive Baptist Church, was served by Rev. Gentry W. King from 1905 to 1937, and it met originally under brush arbors, in community homes, and at the Green Hatcher Schoolhouse. Fletcher Jessup sold half an acre next to the schoolhouse lot to the church trustees in 1912 and the congregation moved into its newly constructed frame church building on August 24, 1912.⁵ Chestnut Ridge Church and the Ridge Westfield Elementary School have maintained a close relationship ever since and have served as important institutions in the Chestnut Ridge African American community.

Public education for Surry County's black population began after the Civil War. In 1877 fifty-four white schools and fourteen black schools were reported for the county. In the early twentieth century education for black students centered in the county's largest town, Mount Airy, aided by the efforts of educator J. J. Jones, for whom the town's black high school was later named.⁶ Another development of the era was the creation of the Rosenwald Fund to aid the construction of black schools. In Surry County, Rosenwald schools are said to have been built at Sandy Level, Elkin, Combstown, Chestnut Ridge, and Ararat (Mount Airy) during the 1920s, although the Fisk University Rosenwald School database lists only four schools.⁷

The Chestnut Ridge Baptist congregation experienced growth during the first decade in its new building, from fifty-five members in 1915 to eighty-one members in 1920.⁸ The size of the school population is not known for certain during the early years but a historic photograph probably taken in the 1920s shows at least forty students and probably more (the published version of the photo is cut off). Shown in the photo is teacher Julia Cox Flowers who began her teaching career after finishing the seventh grade and later attended Winston-Salem Teachers College.⁹ Flowers, who was the first person in her community to receive a bachelor degree, taught at the school through at least 1958.¹⁰ Another mainstay of the school was Julia Cox

² Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, September-November 2018; McCarthur, Nathaniel, comp., *Chestnut Ridge Community historic signage* (2002). George Robert McCarther's name appears as Robert G. McArthur on his tombstone located across the road from the historic signage park. According to Katie L. Hatcher, her parents' generation typically spelled the name McCarther and subsequent generations spell it McCarthur. McArthur is another variant.

³ McCarthur, Nathaniel, comp., *Chestnut Ridge Community historic signage* (2002).

⁴ Surry County Deed Book 46, p. 106, and Deed Book 48, p. 208.

⁵ Surry County Genealogical Association, comp., *A History of Surry County Churches* (Dobson, N.C.: 2003), 81.

⁶ "Rosenwald Schools," Text (ca. 2010?) for Rosenwald Schools exhibit, Mount Airy Museum of Regional History files. Mount Airy, N.C.

⁷ Ibid.; "Black Schools in Surry County," 2; Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database.

⁸ Surry County Genealogical Association, *History of Surry County Churches*, 81.

⁹ Thompson, *Around Surry County*, 78.

¹⁰ Ridge Westfield Principal's Annual Elementary School Report (1956-57), N.C. Department of Public Instruction Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh; "Ridge Westfield Elementary School 2012 Reunion."

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Flowers' sister, Connie Bernice Virginia Cox Lowe (1922-2012), who served as principal in the frame school and later in the brick school from its opening in 1957 until its closing in 1966. In a 1993 interview Lowe noted that Ridge Westfield Elementary School received its name from the consolidation (presumably in 1957) of the Westfield School, located in or near the community of Westfield to the east of Chestnut Ridge, and Chestnut Ridge School at the site of the current school where Lowe commenced her education in 1929.¹¹

The 1956-57 Ridge Westfield Elementary School was built during a period of dramatic change in public education for African Americans. In the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, Chief Justice Earl Warren spoke for the majority when he stated: "Separate education facilities are inherently unequal."¹² The 1954 decision was followed by the court's implementation decree in 1955. In North Carolina, the Pupil Assignment Act gave local school boards discretion in the assignment of students to schools.¹³ Although the act permitted desegregation, in practice that did not occur, and Surry County and other counties did not integrate until after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Concurrently, Surry County underwent a round of school consolidation beginning in the 1940s.¹⁴ The ongoing consolidation process would have a bearing on what happened to Ridge Westfield Elementary School with integration.

According to Bernice Lowe, interest in a building to replace the frame school dates to 1950 when the county superintendent of schools visited Ridge Westfield Elementary School and told Lowe, "We're trying to decide if we are going to build a school here or put it in Mount Airy for the black people." This suggests the school board was considering a consolidated elementary school in Mount Airy and the closing of the school at the Ridge Westfield location. A delegation of school officials visited from Raleigh and, according to Lowe, were so impressed with the approach to teaching and the conduct of the students at Ridge Westfield that the officials recommended building the new school at the site. Lowe believed the success of the Ridge Westfield teaching program was due largely to an insistence that the teachers live in the community. This was true of the majority of the 1950s teaching staff which included herself, her sister Julia Flowers, and Katie Hatcher, "a local girl who had gone to Jones [J. J. Jones High School] in Mount Airy and Winston Salem State."¹⁵

In late 1955 and early 1956, members of the Surry County Board of Education made an inspection tour of the county's public schools, visiting Ridge Westfield on January 3, 1956. On April 24, 1956, the school board voted to apply for a grant from the State School Plant Construction and Improvement Fund in order to build a new school building at the existing Ridge Westfield site. On the same date the board accepted bids to build the school from the following contractors: Fulk and Needham, Inc. (general contractor), Statesville Plumbing & Heating Company (plumbing contractor), John C. David Plumbing and Heating Company

¹¹ Bernice Cox Lowe interview (June 29, 1993) in Chestnut Ridge file, Mount Airy Museum of Regional History subject files, Mount Airy, N.C., 215.

¹² "Black Schools in Surry County," 1.

¹³ Slane and Szcodronski, "West Martin School," 13.

¹⁴ "Black Schools in Surry County," 5-6.

¹⁵ Ibid., 223-224. Katie Hatcher was also Bernice Lowe's cousin,

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(plumbing contractor), and Inman Electric Corporation (electrical contractor). The minutes also note that J. M. Franklin was to be paid a \$4,738 architect's fee.¹⁶ The decision to build the school was announced two days later on the front page of the *Mount Airy News* in an article entitled, "New Ridge-Westfield Negro School Will Be Constructed."¹⁷ The community recalls that Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church deacons Clarence Pilson and Charlie Eugene McCarther (1914-2015) worked on the building. Pilson served as a brick mason on the project.¹⁸ The Riverside Building Supply company is also said to have played a role in the construction.¹⁹

Architect John M. Franklin was based in the Surry County town of Elkin. By the time he designed the new Ridge Westfield Elementary School Franklin had worked in the county for over twenty years. Early projects include his 1935 design for the Elkin High School and his 1937 design for an addition to the 1931 Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital in Elkin.²⁰ In 1938 he designed Elkin's new municipal building, constructed with WPA funds, and in June 1939 he designed the J. J. Jones School, the county's African American high school in Mount Airy, also a WPA-funded project.²¹ Construction drawings for the latter building identify it as Franklin's forty-sixth commission. He was still in practice in 1967 when he was listed as a member of the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects.²² Franklin was presumably on retainer with the Surry County school board in the mid-1950s because his name is associated with numerous school-related projects during the period. In October 1955 he accompanied school board members on an earlier tour of county school facilities and in November he presented his preliminary drawings for a school bus garage to the board. He continued to design schools and additions for the board after Ridge Westfield, including the Mountain Park School addition, the Franklin School, and classrooms and a cafeteria at Flat Rock School, all in 1957.²³

Architecturally, Franklin's design may be classified as Modernist due to its aesthetic of simple flat-roofed rectangular elements, lack of ornament and historical reference, and large expanses of window glass. Other schools of similar character were built for North Carolina's African American students during the period, for example the 1950s Pigeon Street School in Waynesville, Haywood County, and the 1951 West Martin School in Martin County.²⁴ Ridge Westfield Elementary School is relatively straightforward in its design and construction, but one feature relates to an early modification. The existence of seams in the brickwork at the division

¹⁶ Surry County Board of Education Minutes, January 3 and April 24, 1956.

¹⁷ *Mount Airy News*, April 27, 1956.

¹⁸ Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, September-October 2018.

¹⁹ Dennis France, "Ridge Westfield Colored School" (N.C. State Historic Preservation Office Study List Application, 2009). The original source of the Riverside Building Supply company information has not been determined but is assumed to come from community tradition.

²⁰ *Elkin Tribune*, December 19, 1935; Laura A. W. Phillips, "(Former) Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital" (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2001), 9.

²¹ *Elkin Tribune*, June 9, 1938; J. Daniel Pezzoni, J. J. Jones School (SR1064) survey file, N.C. State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh.

²² *North Carolina Architect* (August 1967), p. 14.

²³ Surry County Board of Education Minutes, April 1[8?], May 6, and June 3, 1957.

²⁴ Heather M. Slane and Cheri Szcodronski, "West Martin School" (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2017).

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between the westernmost pair of classrooms and the four classrooms to their east, and the corresponding enclosure of exterior-type brick walls in the two classrooms, suggests the two classrooms were an addition. This is also suggested by the April 27, 1956 newspaper article, which noted the building would include “four class rooms and a cafeteria and auditorium combination.”²⁵ No addition is recalled by individuals who remember the school’s construction, however, suggesting the two classrooms were an early modification, made between the date of the newspaper article and the completion of the school in 1957.

In her May 1957 principal’s report, Bernice Lowe noted, “We have a new modern building which will be used in 1957-1958. The lawn has been sown and the playground is under construction.” In June 1958 Lowe wrote, “We opened in a new building. We will have a very adequate playground as soon as the grading is completed. We got new drapes and curtains for our lunchroom which is also used for an auditorium.” Lowe’s 1958 report provides other details about the first school year in the new building. The inaugural teaching team consisted of J. C. Flowers (first and second grades), K. L. Hatcher (third and fourth grades), G. A. Hughes (fifth and sixth grades), and Lowe (seventh and eighth grades). Subjects included language arts, social studies, science, numbers (math), and health and safety but not music and art (two categories on the report form). Student clubs and extra-curricular activities included a safety squad, baseball team, glee club, and scouts. The same subjects and organizations/activities were provided in the old frame building the year before; the main change was in the quality of the school facility. In her assessment of ten facility categories such as ventilation, lighting, heating, and so forth, Lowe considered only three areas (ventilation, heating, and window shades) to be adequate in the old school. She considered the new school to be adequate in all categories except window shades.²⁶ The average daily membership at the school in 1957-58 was 142 students, some of whom attended from western Stokes County.²⁷

In later reports Lowe noted that the landscaping of the school grounds was completed during the 1958-59 school year and that dramatics had been added to the extra-curricular activities. In June 1960 she wrote, “Playground equipment bought (slide, jungle-gym, swings, and merry-go-round). Flowers planted, and more grass planted.” Scouting (not mentioned in 1958-59) had returned, with Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Brownie Scouts listed.²⁸ Although music and art were not formal course offerings at the school, former teachers and students recall a rich musical and artistic environment. “Mrs. Hatcher taught us about papier-mâché,” recalled a former student in 2012. “Students made horses, globes, and other things that increased our core curriculum. We drew figures, used a variety of materials, painted and created scenes as well . . . Mrs. Hatcher always had positive things to say to the children and without a doubt a favorite saying [of hers] was, your heads are not full of sawdust and water and you will learn this.” Rev. and Mrs. Ward

²⁵ *Mount Airy News*, April 27, 1956.

²⁶ Ridge Westfield Principal’s Annual Elementary School Reports (1956-57 and 1957-58). According to Katie L. Hatcher, the frame school stood just off the west end of the brick school. On June 3, 1957, the county board of education voted to have the old school demolished or removed from the premises, and the building was subsequently demolished or moved away.

²⁷ Bernice Cox Lowe interview (June 29, 1993) in Chestnut Ridge file, Mount Airy Museum of Regional History subject files, Mount Airy, N.C., 227.

²⁸ Ridge Westfield Principal’s Annual Elementary School Reports (1958-59 and 1959-60)

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from the church next door taught the children Christian songs to the accompaniment of Mrs. Flowers on the piano.²⁹ Katie Hatcher recalls morning devotions held in the cafeteria/auditorium and the requirement that students learn the books of the bible and memorize a bible verse every day.³⁰ The authors of the 2012 school reunion program wrote: "Christian education permeated the school environment."³¹

Hatcher also recalls the "operettas" that were performed on the movable cafeteria/auditorium stage as part of commencement exercises. Titles included "Land and Dreams Come True," "Tom Sawyer," and "Cinderella." The community also held "entertainments for raising money for getting supplies."³² Former student Nevada Love recalls May Day activities involving a maypole and humorous "womanless weddings" at other times of the year.³³ An important aspect of the Ridge Westfield experience was a focus on black history and identity. In the words of the authors of the 2012 school reunion program:

Black heritage was taught with grace, preciseness, and pride. Negro History lessons guided a sense of pride in learning. It was taught daily but emphasized more during Negro History Week . . . We learned about many of the contributions made by Negroes through these studies. We knew that our ancestors were kings and queens in Africa. We knew from memory the 3 verses of the Negro National Anthem.

Hatcher recalls the singing of Negro spirituals as part of the music program, and the children studied poems by Harlem Renaissance poets like Langston Hughes and the careers and writings of Mary McCloud Bethune and George Washington Carver. Other poems studied included "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer, "Windy Nights," "The Cow," "The Land of Story-Books," and "Whole Duty of Children" by Robert Louis Stevenson, and "A Psalm of Life" by Henry W. Longfellow. Most of the poems were taught from the book *The Open Door Language Series* (1928, North Carolina Edition). Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and the Preamble to the US Constitution were also learned. When Ridge Westfield Elementary School opened in 1957 it lacked a library, but this was remedied in 1962 and Gloria G. Cox was hired as the librarian. A student recalled that with the new library "it was as if a new world opened for us."³⁴

School board minutes from the period of Ridge Westfield's construction note other projects, including the construction of a school bus garage and fire safety upgrades to existing buildings. The largest project was the construction of six classrooms and a cafeteria at Flat Rock Elementary School, a white school. Like Ridge Westfield, the Flat Rock buildings were designed by John M. Franklin.³⁵ Katie Hatcher does not recall other black schools from the period that were as well built and equipped as Ridge Westfield, other than J. J. Jones High School in Mount

²⁹ "Ridge Westfield Elementary School 2012 Reunion."

³⁰ Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, September-November 2018.

³¹ "Ridge Westfield Elementary School 2012 Reunion."

³² Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, September-November 2018.

³³ Nevada Love, personal communication with the author, September 2018.

³⁴ "Ridge Westfield Elementary School 2012 Reunion;" Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, September-November 2018.

³⁵ Surry County Board of Education Minutes, April 24, 1956, and June 3, 1957.

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Airy, which opened in 1940 as the county's premiere educational facility for African American students.³⁶

The authors of the 2012 school reunion program wrote: "In 1966 our beloved school was closed and we were integrated into other schools. Many could not understand why such a pristine building was closed . . . None of the schools we went to were as new and did not have the climate we shared at Ridge-Westfield. Many of our leaders believed this was the only way we could receive an equally funded education. One could only have been a part of Ridge-Westfield to understand the cultural loss to the African-American community."³⁷ Principal Bernice Lowe was saddened by the closure. "It was a sad time," she recalled in 1993, "because we realized that we were losing something." Ridge Westfield Elementary School was the Chestnut Ridge community's "landmark," the "center of their meetings and everything that they desired to do centered around that school." Lowe noted that when the county decided to consolidate the Ridge Westfield students with the students at the white Westfield School, a group of white tenant farmers in the nearby Flat Rock community sent their children to Ridge Westfield Elementary School "to keep the school from being closed," but the effort was unsuccessful in dissuading the school officials from closing Ridge Westfield Elementary School and transferring its students to Westfield School.³⁸ Lowe also transferred to the other school where she taught special education and fourth grade until her retirement.³⁹ Former student Nevada Love believes the school was closed because with integration whites did not want to send their children to a black school.⁴⁰ Artavious Levander McArthur, another former student whose father Nathaniel McArthur was active with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), believes the school was closed by white school authorities because had it continued in use the black students would have outnumbered the white students.⁴¹

In June 1968 the Surry County Board of Education sold the Ridge Westfield Elementary School and approximately five acres to the trustees of the Chestnut Ridge (Progressive Primitive) Baptist Church for the sum of \$28,243.50.⁴² The church utilized the building as a Sunday School and storage space. In recent years roof leaks damaged the interior but former Ridge Westfield teacher Katie L. Hatcher spearheaded efforts to save the building and in 2017 it was reroofed, arresting the deterioration. The newly formed organization Historic Ridge Westfield Elementary School, Inc., has plans for the building's rehabilitation and work is ongoing.

³⁶ Katie L. Hatcher, personal communication with the author, August 2019; J. Daniel Pezzoni, J. J. Jones School (SR1064) survey file.

³⁷ "Ridge Westfield Elementary School 2012 Reunion."

³⁸ The Westfield School in Lowe's account was not the same school as the earlier black Westfield School in the Westfield community.

³⁹ Bernice Cox Lowe interview (June 29, 1993) in Chestnut Ridge file, Mount Airy Museum of Regional History subject files, Mount Airy, N.C., 228, 231.

⁴⁰ Nevada Love, personal communication with the author, August 2019.

⁴¹ Artavious Levander McArthur, personal communication with the author, August 2019.

⁴² Surry County Deed Book 276, p. 512.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: N.C. State Historic Preservation Office

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): SR0860

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.510468 | Longitude: -80.506499 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
|----------|----------|-----------|

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the approximately two-acre nominated area of the larger 5.8 acre parcel (PIN # 505000782135) are shown on the 1:200-scale map that accompanies the nomination.

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The boundary is rectangular in form and adjoins Westfield Road (Highway 89) along its north side where it follows the parcel line. The west boundary is located 150 feet from the west end of the school in order to encompass a contributing playground and exclude a non-historic cemetery. The south boundary is located 50 feet from the south side of the school in order to encompass a contributing well house. The east boundary extends a line of the larger parcel of which the nominated area is a part, approximately 85 feet from the east end of the school.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the nominated area are defined so as to include the school and two closely associated historic resources (a playground and well house) and to exclude adjacent areas and resources that are not as closely associated with the school and/or have lost or are losing integrity. These include a historic but altered church on the east side, a non-historic cemetery to the west of the playground, and a playing field to the south. Although the latter dates to the historic period and is closely associated with the school, it is being redeveloped as a cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston St.
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: July 27, 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ridge Westfield Elementary School

City or Vicinity: Mount Airy vicinity County: Surry State: North Carolina

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni Date Photographed: September 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

North or front elevation of school. View facing southwest. Photo 1 of 9.

South and east elevations of school. View facing west. Photo 2 of 9.

North and west elevations of school with playground in foreground and well house beyond. Also beyond and located outside the nominated area is Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church. View facing east. Photo 3 of 9.

Playground with cemetery outside nominated area beyond. View facing west. Photo 4 of 9.

Well house with school beyond. View facing north. Photo 5 of 9.

Cafeteria with corridor and portable stage beyond. Photo 6 of 9.

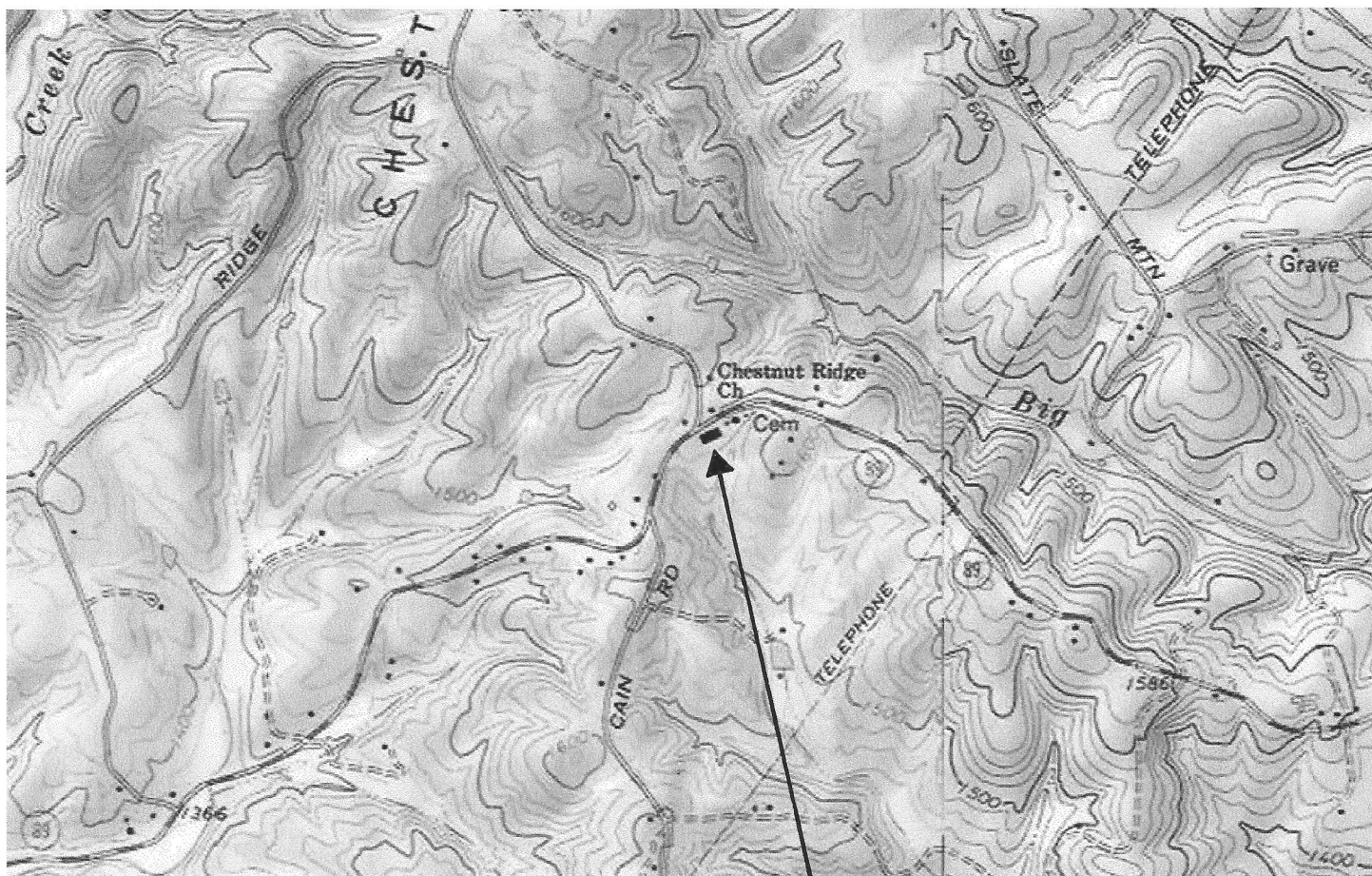
Kitchen. Photo 7 of 9.

Corridor. Photo 8 of 9.

Classroom and restroom. Photo 9 of 9.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

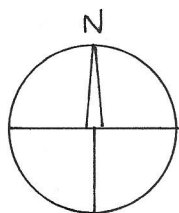
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Ridge Westfield Elementary School
4416 Westfield Rd., Mount Airy vic., Surry Co., N.C.

location of NR property

National Register of Historic Places Location Map
Latitude: 36.510468. Longitude: -80.506499



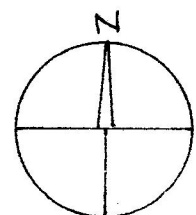
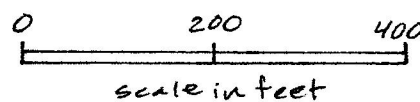
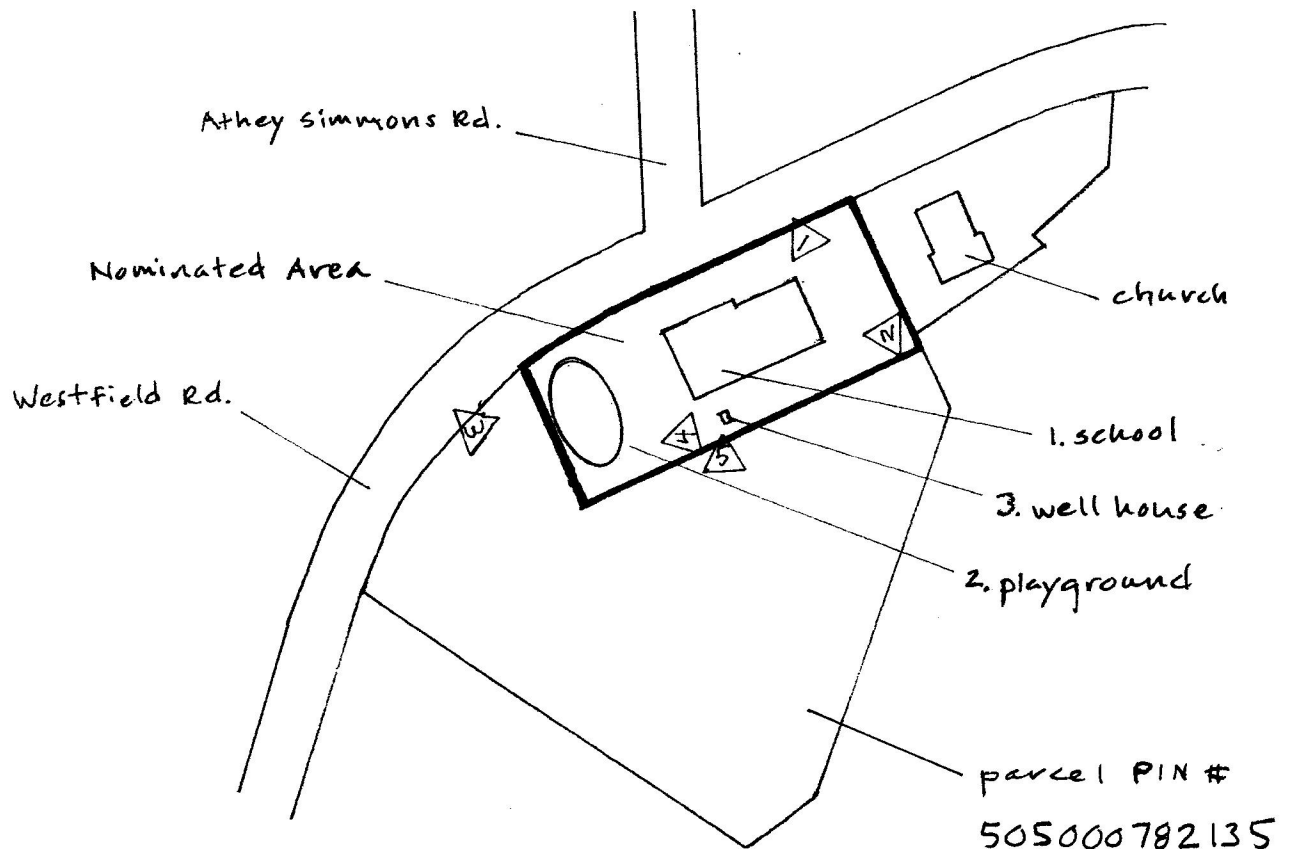
0 0.5
scale in miles

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National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map, Site Plan, and Photo Key

Nominated area and map scale indicated. Resource sizes and locations approximate. Triangular markers indicate number and direction of views and are keyed to photo log in the nomination. Latitude: 36.510468. Longitude: -80.506499. The nominated area is a portion of parcel PIN # 505000782135, the boundaries of which are indicated. Resources are: 1. Ridge Westfield Elementary School. 1956-57. Contributing building; 2. Playground. Ca. 1960. Contributing site; 3. Well house. Ca. 1956-57. Contributing structure.



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The plan is not to scale and room sizes and location are approximate. Triangular markers indicate number and direction of views and are keyed to photo log in the nomination.

